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General Assembly

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Fifty-fourth session

Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-fourth session

Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects

Letter dated 24 April 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fourth session of an additional item of an important and urgent character entitled "Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome in all its aspects".

Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, this request is accompanied by an explanatory memorandum (annex I) and a corresponding draft resolution (annex II).

(*Signed*) Bernd **Niehaus**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Vladimir **Galuška**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yel'chenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Tichaona Joseph B. **Jokonya**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations

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Annex I to the letter dated 24 April 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Explanatory memorandum

The situation of HIV/AIDS has over the past few years been worsening. Concern about the growing spread of the epidemic has prompted action at the highest levels. The issues have been taken up by Heads of State in developed and developing countries, by the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council, and most recently by the Security Council.

Since the beginning of the epidemic, some 50 million people worldwide, 33.6 million of whom are still alive, have become infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Because the epidemic strikes people in their most productive years, those aged between 15 and 49, HIV/AIDS will have greater social and economic impact than other diseases in the most affected areas.

As AIDS affects a cross-section of society in both developing and developed countries, so this complex epidemic is fuelled by many factors. Growing migration, the launch of major infrastructure projects and an increasingly diversified industrial base all conspire to open new avenues for the spread of HIV infection.

Facing this challenge will require comprehensive, multisectoral responses that involve a broad range of actors. Failure to meet it effectively will put at risk all other aspects of international development during the next decade.

To enhance the effectiveness of these efforts it is important that they are complemented by an action which could provide a powerful impetus to the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the struggle of the international community against AIDS. It is, therefore, high time for the United Nations to elaborate a comprehensive agenda for action against the epidemic and to convene a special session of the General Assembly to review the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects and to propose new strategies, methods, practical activities and specific measures to strengthen international cooperation in addressing it.

Annex II to the letter dated 24 April 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Draft resolution

Review of the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in all its aspects

The General Assembly,

Noting with great concern the accelerating spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which has already infected millions of people worldwide, and the resulting increase in cases of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS),

Also noting with great concern that young people, especially adolescent girls, children and women are particularly vulnerable to the infection,

Recognizing that no country in the world has been spared by the AIDS epidemic, and that 90 per cent of the people living with HIV/AIDS live in the developing world, which has been very severely affected,

Mindful that the AIDS epidemic has become a development crisis in many countries, with devastating consequences for human, social and economic progress, which is already undermining the gains of many years of development efforts,

1. *Decides* to hold a special session of the General Assembly, during its fifty-fifth session, from __ to __ May 2001, to review the problem of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in all its aspects;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make the necessary administrative arrangements for the convening of the special session.